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Harold Dutton, Jr.
Garnet Coleman
Jessica Farrar
Gary Elkins
Debbie Riddle
Wayne Smith
Alma Allen
Hubert Vo
Ana Hernandez
Patricia Harless
Armando Wallé



Harris County Delegation

Carol Alvarado
Jim Murphy
Allen Fletcher
Borris Miles
Dan Huberty
Sarah Davis
Gene Wu
Rick Miller
Mike Schofield
Gilbert Peña
Dennis Paul
Jarvis Johnson

June 13, 2016

Chairman Bryan W. Shaw
Commissioner Toby Baker
Commissioner Jon Niermann
Texas Commissioner on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087 MC100
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Dear Chairman Shaw and Commissioners,

As members of the Texas Legislature, we urge you and the Commissioners to favorably view Mayor Sylvester Turner's request to deem the spread of Zika throughout Texas an emergency threat.

By declaring the Zika virus an emergency and to help offset the cost associated with the mass clean-up of illegal dumping, it is our hope that your decision will give municipalities access to the funds from the Solid Waste Disposal Fees Account No. 5000 (Fund 5000) as laid out in Sec. 361.0145 of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 361.0145 states in part that "(a) *The commission may make an immediate response to... emergency that involves solid waste, including processed or unprocessed material suitable for recycling or composting, as the commission determines necessary to **protect the public health and safety***; [emphasis added] (b) *Notwithstanding Section 361.014(b), revenue otherwise dedicated under that section may be used for an action authorized by Subsection (a).*" Please note that Section 361.014(b) dedicates approximately \$5.5 million per year to the Council on Government for landfill planning and usage.

Currently, Fund 5000 maintains a balance of \$130.3 million. In Houston, where the mosquito vector is highly prevalent, the City has estimated an annual cost of \$3.6 million for their mosquito abatement program. While we realize Fund 5000 is a state dedicated account, the Zika virus is not something we should sit around and wait for. With your leadership, we can help cities stay ahead on what we know can be a very costly, long term health crisis.

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We applaud Mayor Turner and the City of Houston for their proactive approach in clearing up the mass illegal dumping and other trash that harvest grounds for mosquito breeding.

We urge you and the Commissioners to protect the public's health and safety and declare the Zika virus an emergency. Doing so will make state funds available immediately in order that our constituents know we are doing everything we can to fight the threat of Zika in our communities.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Rep. Senfronia Thompson


Rep. Harold Dutton, Jr.


Rep. Garnet Coleman


Rep. Jessica Farrar


Rep. Debbie Riddle


Rep. Hubert Vo


Rep. Ana Hernandez

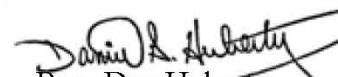

Rep. Patricia Harless


Rep. Armando Walle


Rep. Carol Alvarado


Rep. Jim Murphy


Rep. Allen Fletcher


Rep. Dan Huberty


Rep. Sarah Davis


Rep. Gene Wu


Rep. Gilbert Peña